

CLAIMS

Sub A1

1. A method of prioritizing calls connected to an automated telephone system comprising the steps of:

connecting a plurality of calls to said automated telephone system;

obtaining caller identifying information from each of said connected calls;

placing each of said connected calls on hold;

searching a customer database and identifying a customer database record corresponding to the caller identifying information for each connected call;

retrieving information from said identified customer database records that is relevant to call prioritization;

creating a call record for each connected call, each call record including said caller identifying information and said retrieved call prioritizing information;

inserting each created call record into a hold queue;

and

directing a connected call to an available agent based on the retrieved call prioritizing information.

2. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein each said connected call comprises an incoming telephone call placed by an interested caller to said automated telephone system.

Sub A2

3. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of

2 selecting a connected call to direct to an available agent
3 comprises displaying a list of call records stored in said hold
4 queue, including said caller identifying information and said
5 call prioritizing information for each said connected call on at
6 least one available agent display and manually selecting a
7 connected call to direct to said available agent.

1 4. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of
2 selecting a connected call to direct to an available agent
3 comprises;

4 comparing the retrieved call prioritizing information
5 stored in each call record with at least one predetermined
6 prioritization attribute;

7 arranging the call records in the hold queue according
8 to the prioritizing information comparison; and

9 automatically directing a connected call that enjoys a
10 highest priority position in said hold queue arrangement to an
11 available agent.

D 1 5. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of
2 obtaining caller identifying information comprises using an
3 automatic number identification (ANI) system to obtain a
4 telephone number from which the connected call is placed.

1 6. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of
2 obtaining caller identifying information comprises using an

3 integrated voice response (IVR) system to obtain said caller
4 identifying information directly from a connected caller.

Sub A3
7. A hold queue prioritizing system comprising:
2 an automated telephone system;
3 a call receiver/director for connecting a plurality of
4 calls to said automated telephone system;
5 a customer database including a plurality of database
6 records, each database record including caller identifying
7 information and information relevant to call prioritization;
8 a means for obtaining identifying information from each
9 of said plurality of calls connected to said automated telephone
10 system;
11 at least one hold queue coupled to said call
12 receiver/director, said at least one hold queue for holding call
13 records related to said plurality of connected calls;
14 a plurality of call center agent terminals coupled to
15 said automated telephone system for handling said connected
16 calls; and
17 a hold queue prioritizer for retrieving at least a
18 portion of said call prioritizing information stored in each said
19 database record corresponding to each connected call and for
20 selecting a connected call to direct to an available agent
21 responsive to said call prioritizing information.

1 8. The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed in claim

2 7, wherein said hold queue prioritizer comprises a hold queue
3 call record display, displayed on at least one of said plurality
4 of agent terminals, said call record display including caller
5 identifying information and call prioritizing information for
6 each call record in said hold queue and a means for manually
7 directing a call to an available agent based on said displayed
8 connected call information.

Sub B3
1 9. The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed in claim
2 8, wherein said displayed call prioritizing information comprises
3 raw customer information retrieved from each said customer
4 database record.
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10. The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed in claim
8, wherein said displayed prioritizing information comprises a
call priority score derived by said hold queue prioritizer
responsive to said call prioritizing information retrieved from
each said customer database record.

11. The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed in claim
10, wherein said displayed call priority score is an absolute
call priority score.

12. The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed in claim
10, wherein said displayed call priority score is a relative call
priority score.

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1 13. The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed in claim
2 7, wherein said means for obtaining caller identifying
3 information comprises an automatic number identification (ANI)
4 system.

1 14. The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed in claim
2 7, wherein said means for obtaining caller identifying
3 information comprises an integrated voice response (IVR) system.

Sub A4

1 15. A system for prioritizing calls on hold and connected
2 to an automated telephone system comprising:

3 a call receiver/director for receiving a plurality of
4 calls connected to said automated telephone system and for
5 directing said plurality of connected calls to a plurality of
6 agent terminals coupled to said call receiver/director;

7 a customer database, including customer database
8 records including caller identifying information and call
9 prioritizing information;

10 a hold queue prioritizer, coupled to said call
11 receiver/director, said hold queue prioritizer including:

12 a means for obtaining caller identifying information
13 from each of said plurality of connected calls;

14 a means for searching said customer database to
15 identifying customer database records
16 corresponding to said obtained caller identifying
17 information for each of said plurality of

18 connected calls, and retrieving said call
19 prioritizing information from each of said
20 identified customer database records;
21 a means for creating a call record for each of said
22 plurality of connected calls, each call record
23 including said caller identifying information and
24 said call prioritizing information;
25 at least one hold queue, coupled to said call hold
26 queue prioritizer for storing said created call records; and
27 a means for selecting a connected call to direct to an
28 available agent based on said call prioritizing information.

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16. The system for prioritizing calls on hold and connected
to an automated telephone system as claimed in claim 15, wherein
said means for selecting a call to direct to an available agent
comprises an on hold call record display for displaying said
plurality of call records stored in said hold queue, said
displayed call records including caller identifying information
7 and call prioritizing information and a means for allowing an
8 available agent to manually select a connected call to direct to
9 said available agent based on said displayed call prioritizing
10 information.

17. The system for prioritizing calls on hold and connected
to an automated telephone system as claimed in claim 15, wherein
said means for selecting a call to direct to an available agent

4 comprises a means for automatically directing a connected call to
5 an available agent based on the call prioritizing information
6 stored in said plurality of call records in said hold queue.

1 18. The system for prioritizing calls on hold and connected
2 to an automated telephone system as claimed in claim 15, wherein
3 said call prioritizing information corresponding to each said
4 connected call comprises raw information retrieved from each said
5 customer database record.

19. The system for prioritizing calls on hold and connected to an automated telephone system as claimed in claim 15, wherein said call prioritizing information corresponding to each said connected call comprises a call priority score derived by said hold queue prioritizer responsive to said retrieved call prioritizing information for each said connected call.